

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on May 27, 2009, has been received and its contents carefully considered. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Upon entry of the present Reply, Claims 1-30 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-28 and 30 stand rejected. Claim 29 is objected to. Claims 1 and 30 have been amended by way of the present response. Claims 28 and 29 have been cancelled by way of the present response. Applicant submits that upon entry of the present Reply, Claims 1-27 and 30 are in condition for allowance. Moreover, Applicant submits that no new matter has been introduced by the foregoing amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the outstanding action, Claim 29 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Based on the Examiner's suggestion, the limitations of Claims 28 and 29 have been incorporated into independent Claim 1.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 1 constitutes allowable subject matter. Since dependent Claims 2-30 incorporate all the elements of independent Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-30 likewise constitute allowable subject matter.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the outstanding Action, Claims 1-5, 14-28 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,489,753 to Gibel in view of U. S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0175022 to Schumacher et al., now US Patent No. 7,040,451. Claims 6, 7 and 9-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Gibel in view of Schumacher as applied to Claim 4, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,977,381 to Fujikawa et al.

Applicant respectfully traverses each of these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent Claim 1 is the sole independent claim presently under consideration. Independent Claim 1 has been amended to constitute allowable subject matter, as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been rendered moot.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 1 is patentable over the prior art of record. Since dependent Claims 2-30 incorporate all the elements of independent Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-30 likewise are patentable over the prior art of record.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the application in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Timothy J. Maier, Applicants' attorney at 1.703.740.8322 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
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